

May 24, 2018

Hearing on interim charges to examine research-based options for evaluating student achievement beyond standardized test scores.

Randy Willis, Superintendent of Schools

Granger Independent School District

One of Steven Covey's seven tenets of being successful is to "begin with the end in mind." I asked this question to the school finance commission, and I will ask the question to you, the House public education committee. Please define the student outcome that we want for all our students in the state of Texas. The answer to that simple question should be the vision and direction this state can use to lead the 1200 school districts in our state on almost every issue that is facing public education.

If you were to ask the Commissioner and his staff at the Texas Education Agency, I believe they would say that the results of our student assessments, which test the state approved standards, is the desired student outcome we want for our state schools. The accountability system supports that premise. I, and many of my superintendent colleagues, would argue that student assessments should not be THE rating standard for our public schools, but rather, it should be the graduation of our students from high school. There are many stakeholders in our state that would add, that not only should they graduate, but they should be college and career ready.

Our new state accountability system which the state agency has developed would support all of those elements. I really commend Jamie Crowe and his staff in TEA's Division of Performance Reporting on the time, effort, and incredible task they had in developing the new system that will grade our school districts over the next five years. I would argue however, that the graduation rates should have a greater weight in the new system, but that is for another debate and another time.

We are here today to discuss the fundamental driving force of the new accountability system, the State Assessment Program and student testing. Our state standards for reading, writing, and math are among the best if not the very best in the nation. Our State Board Of Education and the Texas Education Agency have an incredible process in place to build the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) which lays out what we want students in our public school system to learn. I do not argue the rigor of the standards, I strongly support them. I

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want to be very clear; I do not and have not advocated changing or rewriting our state standards. What I have advocated for, very passionately over the past five years, is to assess only the essential standards, the Readiness standards. If the Governor had signed SB 313 at the end of the 84th legislative session, which both the Senate and House passed through their committees and legislative bodies, we would not be here today.

Let me give you two examples to make my point and then review recommendations to address the issues. The state legislation tries to address all the issues in the state in a very short period of time once every two years. Thousands and thousands of bills are filed, our state has a lot of needs that have to be addressed: transportation issues, medical and health care issues, water issues, public safety issues, and public education issues. You only have 140 days to address the 6,000 plus bills filed, and you only have so much money to fund those bills. You have to make hard choices, and at the end of the session you are rated by every organization in the state on your legislative performance. I empathize with you, because that is what a school district and superintendent have to do every year not every other year.

Now let's take this one step further. At the end of your session, you have one bill; a bill that is bigger than all the others. Your entire credibility as a state legislator is on the line. You are going to be rated as good or bad, and job well done or not, based on an entire session worth of work. You press the vote button, and it does not work. The technology misfires for 20 of 150 legislators' and votes are not counted. Imagine your horror and frustration. It gets fixed, and you hit your vote button again, and again it does not work, and you get logged off. What frustration do you think you would have when all the work you have done for the session may not be counted? Oh, you are assured that it will be ok, it will be fixed, that just a few representatives had this problem.

Now imagine that you are an 8-year-old, and your entire year of learning comes down to one test, and it is going to tell everyone what you have learned. And, in the middle of the exam, you get logged off. You are wondering, did all my answers get recorded? Can you imagine all the thoughts going through a child's mind? And, this happens two or three times during the exam, and the child is so upset he just starts hitting buttons just to get through it. Can you imagine what a teacher is going through because her evaluation may be tied to that child's

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performance? Can you imagine what a principal is going through because her evaluation may be tied that child's performance as well? Can you imagine what a parent may think because grade promotion may be tied to that performance? And now, the district is going to be rated A-F for that child's performance.

I give you that example because having one summative exam at the end of the school to hold students and schools accountable for learning is wrong. Especially when I have students throwing up on their tests because of test anxiety (which is what happen to one of my 5th graders this year). The high stakes exams that we have today is just plain and simply wrong. If we want to prepare our students for future jobs, and to be leaders in our industries for the 21st century, to be creative thinkers, then we need to move from a culture of testing to a culture of learning.

My first takeaway for your consideration, is that we must have diagnostic exams for feedback to direct the learning of our students. Locally accepted diagnostic assessments from state approved vendors will provide a wealth of meaningful student data for districts, teacher, parents and students. Many school districts already have these assessment systems in place to measure student growth. Renaissance Learning and NWEA MAP are an examples of two companies being used by many Texas school districts. Both assessment providers use research based, norm referenced assessments to diagnose student skill levels in Texas reading and math standards. Students simply log in and take a short assessment of recently taught TEKS that usually lasts around 30 minutes. Teachers use these results to target instructional plans and monitor student progress. This directs curriculum and instruction decisions in the direction of skills recovery and growth rather than test performance.

My second takeaway for your consideration is to use the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment to address college and career readiness instead of high school EOC exams. Currently, state law requires all students entering college to be assessed in college readiness in reading, mathematics, and writing. Texas could eliminate high stakes testing (EOC's) and still hold school districts accountable for meeting recommended standards by implementing the TSI Assessment (why have we created a dual testing system, which is a waste of money and is not very efficient?). Unlike EOC exams, this assessment uses 20 questions per subject area to decide if students are meeting college readiness thresholds. Students who are not ready for college

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coursework receive relatively inexpensive intervention modules that help improve areas of weakness. It is diagnostic in nature. Taking this assessment in 10th grade allows time for growth and development during 11th and 12th grade before graduation and entrance into higher institutions of learning.

I would also like for you to consider alternative assessments such as the PSAT and OECD international test for schools. Texas 8th, 9th and 10th graders would be better served by taking the PSAT than the STAAR exams. The PSAT provides educators with a detailed summary report for each student, showing their strengths and weaknesses for college readiness. Unlike the STAAR test, the PSAT gives students detailed feedback, showing areas of concern, with a plan of action that shows the specific steps needed for improvement. Each student has a unique login where they can access videos like Khan Academy for free and use their results to create a plan to guide their course work for high school.

How do you know if you have a world class school if you do not have a world class benchmark? The OECD Test for Schools is an international student assessment tool geared for use by schools to support research, benchmarking, and school improvement efforts. Countries across the world and Europe administer this test every three years to shape their education policies. (The Poland education reform is attached for your review) In Texas, districts can choose to follow the three year pattern or opt for a yearly test. Once again, this assessment provides a detailed, informative report (over 150 pages of enriched best practices). This report is more helpful to school districts than a pass/fail status report from state exams. Attached is a comparison for Granger's science scores compared to world OECD scores. Although Granger's three year average for 8th grade science is only 57% passing, in 2015, our OECD science scores would be ranked 25th when compared to the other countries that were assessed (reference pages 3-4). Alternative assessments (such as the PSAT and OECD) should be piloted and allowed to show growth and learning in lieu of our state exams. Give ISDs the flexibility to choose and report back.

And finally, if there is one major take away, review SB 313 from the 84th legislative session, (reference page 5), and assess only the readiness standards. I have been championing this for over 5 years. Our students will be given twenty-two high stake exams from third grade through

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eleventh grade in nine years. That is a lot of testing. A principle issue in the assessment debate that is not being addressed adequately is the number of standards that are being required to be taught with a limited amount of time available in the academic school year for students to learn them.

Please reference page 6, the testable standards vs instructional days. The SBOE has addressed these issues with the streamlining of the TEKS. However, this has not reduced the number of TEKS but only replaced and reworded the standards (reference pages 7-10). We still have the same issue of trying to teach a lot of standards in just a few days. Similar to my example at the beginning of my presentation of the state legislature trying to address all the needs of the state in a very short amount of time. Schools must also prioritize learning standards for students to learn in a very short amount of time. We ask students to learn a lot of information and then take one summative assessment to determine how well they have learned that information. We make it very hard for children who are struggle with learning disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learning to keep pace with a scope and sequence that requires a different standard to be mastered every 2 or 3 hours of class time. For the most part, instead of creating a culture of learning, we are setting many students up for failure with the number of standards learn to before the state exams.

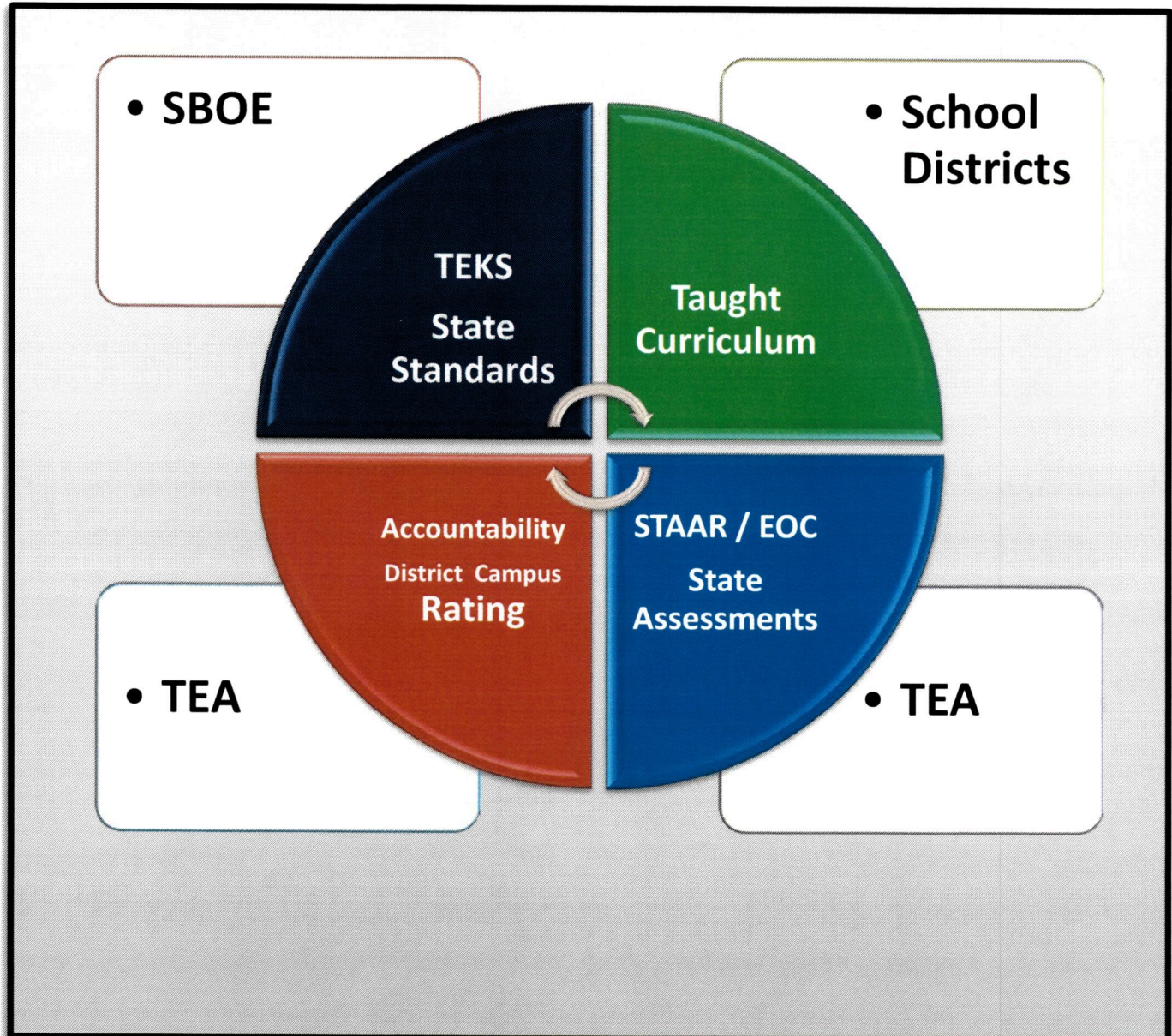
We have great teachers in the state of Texas. They do an extraordinary job with limited resources on an agrarian based school calendar and with a six and a half hour school day. I ask you to take a serious look at the number of assessed standards you are asking teachers to teach and students to learn, identify the “essential” elements such as the “Readiness Standards”, and then test only those standards. I covered a lot of information over the past few minutes for your consideration. You can review a summary of my recommendations on the last few pages my handouts (pages 11-13).

Randy Willis

Superintendent of Schools

Granger ISD

Understanding Texas State Assessment System



School Year – 180 days / Testing Calendar 140-155 days

Elem - Avg 31 Standards - 4.5 Classes Per Standard - Per Subject

Middle School - Avg 42 Standards - 3.4 Classes Per Standard -Per Subject

High School Avg - 55 Standards - 2.6 Classes Per Standard - Per Subject

TEXAS HIGH STAKES TESTING - HISTORICAL ANALYSIS - 1980-2014

YEAR	State Assessment	Grades tested	Subjects tested	Linked to Graduation/Grade Promotion (High Stakes Exams)	YEAR	SAT-R	SAT-M	ACT
1980 1983	TABS-Texas Assessment of Basic Skills	Grades 3,5,9	Reading, Math, Writing	No	1980 1983	502 503	492 494	
1984 1990	TEAMS-Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills	Grades 1,3,5,7,9,11	Reading, Math, Writing	Diploma denied if Exit level not passed (11)	1984 1990	504 500	497 501	
1991 1993 1994 1995 2000 2001 2002	TAAS-Texas Assessment of Academic Skills Focus changed from minimum skills to academic skills " Essential Elements" Testing moved from fall to spring & grade levels reconfigured Adoption of EOC Assessments RPTE-Reading Proficiency Tests in English SDAA-State-Developed Alternative Assessment	Grades 3,5,7,9,11 Grades 4,8,10 Grade 3-8, 10 Grade 8 Grade 10= Exit level	Reading, Math, Writing Reading & Math Science & Social Studies	Diploma denied if Exit level not passed (11) Diploma denied if Exit level not passed (10) Legislation requiring the inclusion of EOC as option for graduation requirement TAAS administered for last time in 3-8 Exit TAAS remained graduation requirement for students in 9th or above on Jan. 1, 2001	1991 1993 1994 1995 2000 2001 2002	499 500 504 504 505 506 504	500 503 504 506 514 514 516	 19.3 19.4 19.9 19.9
2003 2004 2005 2006 2008 2010	TAKS- Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills TEKS-Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills End of Social Promotion...SSI TELPAS-Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System LAT-Linguistically Accommodated Testing SDAA II-State-Developed Alternative Assessment II TAKS-I- TAKS Inclusive TAKS- Alt--TAKS Alternate replaced SDAA II TAKS Accommodated replaced TAKS I TAKS- M--TAKS Modified	Grades 3,5,8,9,10,11		Diploma denied if Exit level not passed in 4 content areas...ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies / ELA and Math for 5th and 8th	2003 2004 2005 2006 2008 2010	507 508 508 503 500 500	519 518 520 518 514 515	20.0 20.2 20.2 20.3 20.5 20.9
2011 2012 2013 2014	STAAR-State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness STAAR-State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End of Course Exams STAAR EOC...Revision	Grades 3-8 Grades 4 and 7 Grades 5 and 8 Grade 8 Grades 9-12 Grades 9-12	Math Writing Science Social Studies English 1 Writing English 1 Reading English 2 Writing English 2 Reading English 3 Writing English 3 Reading Algebra 1 Geometry Algebra 2 Biology Chemistry Physics World Geography World History US History English 1 English 2 Algebra 1 Biology US History	 Diploma denied if student does not pass 15 EOC's Test score counts for 15% of final grade in subject tested Diploma denied if student does not pass 5 End of Course tests	2011 2012 2013 2014	497 496 496 496	514 514 514 514	20.8 20.8 20.9 21
						502	519	20.05
Over the past 34 years the amount of instruction time to teach has remained unchanged but the standards and testing have increase drastically								

Granger VS Texas Vs WORLD

Test Given	2012 % Passed (Level II)	2013 % Passed (Level II)	2014 % Passed (Level II)	2015 % Passed (Level II)	3 yr Avg
8th Science STAAR	56	55	45	70	57
GISD OECD International			482	500	491
World OECD 2012			480	480	480
EOC Bio	90	81	95	91	89

Granger's 8th grade science scores avg 57 % over three years but yet Granger scores internationally are above world OECD avg in science.

Granger ISD VS World Scores 2015

Science

1	Shanghai-China	580	
2	Hong Kong-China	555	
3	Singapore	551	
4	Japan	547	
5	Finland	545	
6	Estonia	541	
7	Korea	538	
8	Chinese Taipei	532	
9	Poland	526	
10	Canada	525	
11	Liechtenstein	525	
12	Germany	524	
13	Netherlands	522	
14	Ireland	522	
15	Macao-China	521	
16	Australia	521	
17	New Zealand	516	
18	Switzerland	515	
19	United Kingdom	514	
20	Slovenia	514	
21	Czech Republic	508	
22	Austria	506	
23	Belgium	505	
24	Latvia	502	
25	Granger 2015	500	
26	France	499	
	Denmark	498	
27	United States	497	
28	Spain	496	
29	Lithuania	496	
30	Norway	495	
31	Hungary	494	
32	Italy	494	
33	Luxembourg	491	
34	Croatia	491	
35	Portugal	489	
36	Russian Federation	486	
37	Sweden	485	
38	Granger 2014	482	
39	World Avg	480	
	Iceland	478	
40	Slovak Republic	471	
41	Israel	470	
42	Greece	467	
	Turkey	463	
43	Bulgaria	446	
44	Serbia	445	
45	Chile	445	
46	Thailand	444	
47	Dubai (UAE)	440	
	Romania	439	
48	Kazakhstan	425	
49	Uruguay	416	
50	Mexico	415	
51	Montenegro	410	
52	Jordan	409	
53	Argentina	406	
54	Brazil	405	
55	Colombia	399	
56	Tunisia	398	
57	Albania	397	
58	Qatar	384	
59	Indonesia	382	
60	Peru	373	
61			

OECD average

501

By: Seliger

S.B. No. 313

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

relating to review and modification of the essential knowledge and skills of the required public school curriculum.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 28.0025 to read as follows:

Sec. 28.0025. REVIEW AND MODIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. (a) The State Board of Education shall:

(1) conduct a review of the essential knowledge and skills adopted under Section 28.002; and

(2) modify the essential knowledge and skills to narrow the number and scope of standards and skills for each subject and grade level in accordance with this section.

(b) In complying with this section, the State Board of Education shall consider:

(1) for each subject and grade level, the time:

(A) a teacher would require to provide comprehensive instruction on a particular standard or skill; and

(B) a typical student would require to master a particular standard or skill;

(2) whether, in light of the consideration required by Subdivision (1), each essential knowledge and skill of a subject can be comprehensively taught within the number of school days required under Section 25.081, not including the number of days required for testing;

(3) the college and career readiness standards, and whether inclusion of part of those standards in the essential knowledge and skills of a subject is possible; and

(4) whether an assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023 adequately assesses a particular standard or skill.

(c) The State Board of Education shall identify process skills for each subject in the essential knowledge and skills or use process skills already identified for each subject in the essential knowledge and skills to guide the board's modification of the essential knowledge and skills. The essential knowledge and skills of a subject must be based on process skills that enable students to engage with the content of the subject and attain a greater depth of understanding of content.

(d) In establishing or following an established timeline for reviewing and modifying the essential knowledge and skills, the State Board of Education shall ensure that the timeline reflects a priority to first review and modify a subject for which an end-of-course assessment instrument under Section 39.023(c) is administered before a subject for which an assessment instrument under Section 39.023(a) is administered. The board shall complete the review and modification of the essential knowledge and skills for each subject and grade level not later than September 1, 2018.

(e) Until the review and modification under this section is complete, the State Board of Education shall ensure that each assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023 beginning with the 2015-2016 school year assesses only essential knowledge and skills identified as readiness standards by the agency.

(f) Following the review and modification under this section, the number and scope of the essential knowledge and skills for each subject and grade level may not be greater than the number and scope of the essential knowledge and skills identified as readiness standards by the agency for each subject and grade level as of January 1, 2015.

(g) This section expires September 1, 2018.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this

2013 Standards

Readiness Standards (65%)	Supporting Standards (35%)	Total Blueprint Standards	Days of Instruction before Exam	Assessed Standards to Teach	AVG Class per Standard	Subject
9	19	28	144	36	4.00	3rd Math
12	11	23	144	18	8.00	3rd Reading
10	23	33	144	41	3.51	4th Math
13	14	27	144	25	5.76	4th Reading
12	25	37	133	14	9.50	4th Writing
10	20	30	133	38	3.50	5th Math
15	19	34	133	28	4.75	5th Reading
12	22	34	145	49	2.96	5th Science
			140	31	4.50	8 Exams
10	21	31	144	39	3.69	6th Math
13	21	34	144	28	5.14	6th Reading
10	23	33	144	38	3.79	7th Math
14	20	34	144	28	5.14	7th Reading
12	18	30	133	15	8.87	7th Writing
11	22	33	133	40	3.33	8th Math
13	21	34	133	28	4.75	8th Reading
15	34	49	145	62	2.34	8th Science
36	56	92	145	100	1.45	8th Social Studies
			141	42	3.35	9 Exams
12	14	26	132	57	2.81	EOC ELA I R/W
9	23	32	134	28	2.39	EOC ELA II R/W
13	26	39	150	39	3.85	EOC Algebra I
16	26	42	148	58	2.55	EOC Biology
43	66	109	155	118	1.31	EOC US History
			144	50	2.88	5 Exams
						22 Exams (9 years)

2017 Standards

Readiness Standards (65%)	Supporting Standards (35%)	Total Blueprint Standards	Additional Standards
13	31	44	16
12	11	23	0
13	28	41	8
13	14	27	0
11	25	36	-1
12	24	36	6
15	19	34	0
12	22	34	0
16	35	51	20
13	21	34	0
13	25	38	5
14	20	34	0
11	18	29	-1
13	27	40	7
13	21	34	0
15	34	49	0
36	57	93	1
20	37	57	31
20	39	59	27
16	33	49	10
16	26	42	0
43	66	109	0

TEKS Streamlining

As revisions are made to the TEKS, changes are subsequently made to the assessment program to maintain a strong, direct, and effective link between the TEKS and the statewide assessments.

The timing of the revisions to the assessment program depends on the timing for the adoption of the revised TEKS and implementation date established by the State Board of Education.

Please keep in mind that for any school year, the state assessments will always align to the curriculum in place across the state for that school year.

Potential changes to STAAR Grade 5 Science*

- Edited language in 7 Supporting Standards
- Edited language in 5 Readiness Standards
- Recoded 4 Student Expectations
- Recoded 3 Process Standards
- Deleted 1 Readiness Standard

*based on final committee recommendations

Potential changes to STAAR Grade 8 Science*

- Deleted 4 Supporting Standards
- Deleted part of 1 Supporting Standard and merged with 1 Readiness Standard
- Edited language in 3 Readiness Standards
- Edited language in 6 Supporting Standards
- Recoded 7 Student Expectations
- Deleted 1 Readiness Standard

*based on final committee recommendations

Potential changes to STAAR Biology*

- Deleted 7 Supporting Standards
- Deleted part of 1 Supporting Standard and merged it with 1 Supporting Standard
- Edited language in 3 Readiness Standards
- Edited language in 3 Supporting Standards
- Recoded 10 student expectations

*based on final committee recommendations

An Assessment Plan for Texas Educational Policy Makers

Moving from a culture of testing to a culture of learning

Issue: The state of Texas has been using standardized tests to assess student learning since 1980. In that year, SAT scores in reading and math were 502, and 492 respectively. Fast forward to the year 2014, and after 34 years of ever-changing testing regimes, we are still where we started: we have averaged 502 in reading, and 519 in math. If stake holders wish to move forward responsibly and advocate for children, we must look honestly at why these tests do not promote growth, and use a better assessment model.

Background: While SAT scores and the length of the school year have remained largely unchanged, curriculum standards and assessment have increased drastically. With a state assessment at the end of the year, educators must teach their entire curriculum before the summative test date which cannot effectively measure student growth. In some grades students test in March, giving teachers 135 days to complete their curriculum. This does not provide time for students to learn concepts deeply, or engage in creative learning. When scores come in, there is little time for teachers to go back and make instructional changes. In most cases, the student never sees the questions they missed. They do not learn from the experience because Pass/Fail scores do not diagnose areas of concern. In large school districts, curriculum specialists can work through the summer to adjust teaching approaches for district teachers before the next school year begins. Small and rural districts do not have staff or money to analyze their results and make adjust to their curriculum as well as their larger and better funded district do.

Solution: If we are to help children overcome their academic difficulties and find success in their endeavors, we must adapt our assessment plan to meet their needs. What teachers and students of all ages fundamentally need are multiple assessments that will give detailed feedback, along with time to analyze the results and take appropriate action. One summative state assessment at the end of the year is not a good measure of student learning.

Elementary Grades K-8	Secondary Grades 9-12	Optional Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Locally accepted diagnostic assessments• State approved vendors• State reporting template	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TSI assessment Grade 10, 11, & 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PSAT Grade 8-12• OECD Test for schools (PISA)

An Assessment Plan for Texas Educational Policy Makers

Moving from a culture of testing to a culture of learning

1. Elementary Grades 1-8

- A. Locally accepted diagnostic assessments from state approved vendors will allow a wealth of meaningful student data for districts, teacher, parents and students. Many school districts already have these assessment systems in place to measure student growth. Renaissance Learning and NWEA MAP are an examples of two companies being used by many Texas school districts. Both assessment providers use research based, norm referenced assessments to diagnose student skill levels in Texas reading and math standards. Students simply log in and take a short assessment of recently taught TEKS that usually lasts around 30 minutes. *Teachers use these results to targeted instructional plans and monitor student progress. This directs curriculum and instruction decisions in the direction of skills recovery and growth rather than test performance.*

2. Secondary Grades 9-12

- A. College Readiness-Grade 10; currently, state law requires all entering college students to be assessed in college readiness in reading, mathematics, and writing. Texas could eliminate high stakes testing (EOC's) and still hold school districts accountable for meeting recommended standards by implementing the TSI assessment. Unlike EOC exams, this assessment uses 20 questions per subject area to decide if students are meeting college readiness thresholds. Students who are not ready for college coursework receive relatively inexpensive intervention modules that help improve areas of weakness. Taking this assessment in 10th grade allows time for growth and development before graduation and entrance into higher institutions of learning.

3. Optional assessments

- A. Texas 8th graders would be better served by taking the PSAT than the STAAR exams. The PSAT provides educators with a detailed summary report for each student, showing their strengths and weaknesses. Unlike the STAAR test, the PSAT gives students detailed feedback, showing areas of concern, with a plan of action that shows them the specific steps needed for improvement. Each student has a unique login, where they can access videos from Khan Academy, and use their results to create a core course work plan for high school.
- B. International Benchmarking for 15 year of students: The OECD Test for Schools is a student assessment tool geared for use by schools to support research, benchmarking, and school improvement efforts. Europe administers this test every three years to shape their education policies. In the United States, districts can choose to follow the three year pattern, or opt for a yearly test. Once again, this assessment provides a detailed, informative report, which is more helpful to school districts than a pass/fail status report. It is given to a random sample of 15 year olds and tests reading, mathematics, and science. Students also respond to survey questions about the culture and disciplinary environment of their campus

TESTING STANDARDS ISSUES

Scope and Breadth of TEKS vs Available Instructional Days

1

- TEA Assessment Issue
- Assess only the "essential standards" (Readiness) Not the entire state curriculum

2

- SBOE Issue- Must fit approved standards within the testing calendar and instructional days available

Students must have sufficient time to master the rigor and complexity of the new standards

- How many standards can a student master in 140 days?